

# THE IMPACT OF COMMUNITY BASED TOURISM ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN SARAWAK

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## ABSTRACT

*Community Based Tourism (CBT) or homestay is a new form of tourism product in which tourism is managed by the local communities. The local communities are fully responsible in every aspect of their tourism management ranging from decision making, planning and evaluation. The main approach of CBT is to empower the local communities while emphasizing environmental, social and cultural sustainability. Moreover, CBT provides tourists with the learning process about the community lifestyle, local culture and customs. It gives the tourists interaction opportunity with local communities on the cultural heritage and natural environment. CBT is lifeblood for the sustainability of homestay industry in Malaysia. Apart from improving the life standard of local communities, the main agenda of the CBT is to preserve the socio-cultural status and the environment of the local communities. This study examines the factors affecting the sustainable management of CBT. It covers 20 homestays in three villages in Sarawak. They are Kampung Annah Rais, Padawan, Kampung Tebekang Melayu, Serian and Kampung Santubong, Kuching. This study concludes that CBT has a significant impact on the community development.*

**Keywords:** Homestay, Community Based Tourism, Community, Development, Leadership.

## INTRODUCTION

Tourism industry is a second largest contributor after manufacturing sector to Malaysia's economy (Ibrahim & Razzaq, 2010). This evidence suggests that tourism industry is playing an important role in earning foreign exchange, employment opportunities and economic development. Malaysia announced homestay as an official tourism product in 1995 as a catalyst for the rural development (Pusiran & Xiao, 2013). Homestay reflects upon local culture, tradition and heritage of a variety of communities in Malaysia. This demands that there is a need to train the homestay operators to understand that the expectations of the visitors are in line with the country's vision and mission.

The purpose of this paper is to examine homestay service provision rendered by three villages in Sarawak, Malaysia to determine its contribution to local community development. The findings will help fine tune the practices and services of this fast growing industry. This aspect is elaborated by the following account. Tourism Transformation Plan 2020 forecasts the influx of number of tourists visiting Malaysia in 2020 will be 36 million and will contribute to RM 268 billion in revenue (Mohamad Nor et. al., 2012). In this regard, gov-